

Alcohol Panic



Credits to a certain supremely massive absolutely huge cardinally colossal foremostly enormous surpassingly grand tremendous Remfag. Story from Tanpenshuu 2 set at the end of arc 2, and yes it's **CANON**... Release was a bit delayed because I've been very busy this past week. **(December 8) I can't and won't start translating anything for a week. If I do start anything, I promise to never mention or involve myself with**

anything related to Rem again as punishment. I love Rem soooooooooooooooooo much. Okay, think that's all, hope you all enjoy it.

There is a multitude of unused establishments within the Roswaal L Mathers territory's main mansion. It is located away from the city, but close to the mountain forest, and is a site that has a size comparable to a small castle, being made up of three different different wings.

The main wing consists of principal establishments such as the dining hall, the parlor, and the large public bath, while the east wing has establishments such as the guest room used for visitors, and the private room for the mansion's residents and maids. And lastly, there is the west wing that has many multipurpose establishments.

The west wing is used much less in comparison to the other wings. It would be enough to classify the establishments as multi-purposed, but to be exact, you could say that only establishments of disordered roles were gathered at the west wing.

It had an uneventful dance hall, along with a warehouse containing unadorned paintings and other works of art. There were things like unvaluable books in Beatrice's forbidden archives; there was too much unused establishments.

Hence, although the west wing was included in the cleaning rotation, it was a completely unused building in regards to everyday life. There was a place in the west wing that people went in and out of the most, but it was just a storage room in the corridor that connected to the main wing, so it was understandable how it became deserted.

[Subaru: Therefore, it's not really worth completely cleaning it up like this for 3 days...or wait, I wonder what kind of point of view that Nee-sama has on it.]

Subaru took off his uniform coat, and said these words with his sleeves tucked in while having the duster in his hand.

He sweeps away the floating dust with his hand with a frown on his face. It was apparent that the dust fluttering in the air would not go away, no matter

how thorough he was with the cleaning. It really was quite the annoying opponent to deal with.

[Subaru: I really do wonder where dust goes and comes from. Nee-sama, what do you think?]

[Ram: What.....? Stop saying stupid things. Move with your hands, not with your mouth. No matter what Barusu says, Roswaal's wishes shall be fulfilled perfectly. That is our job.]

[Subaru: Okay okay, I understand. Then I will do my.....the hell!?!]

Subaru raised a criticizing voice at the perpetrator who kicked his butt while he was making his admirably splendid speech. After taking a look, he saw Ram, the person who answered him coldly, on top of the wooden box at the corner of the room with her legs elegantly crossed.

Of course, she was there without a mop or dust cloth in her hand, yawning with her hand on her mouth, cleaning—

[Subaru: Just when I thought you were working without complaints, I see this! We're a team that halves the work between us, aren't we? If it's quartered instead, we won't be able to finish!]

[Ram: If you are unable to feel shame about your own incompetence, then you are done as a human.....you are useless, Barusu.]

[Subaru: Can you take a good look at the current situation, then speak!? Look at it objectively. You think I'm the useless one?]

[Ram: Nothing will change if you're missing a little help for something like cleaning an unused storage room.]

[Subaru: Whatever happened to the Ram that said she'd fulfill Roswaal-sama's wishes perfectly?]

Ram sighed with feigned ignorance at Subaru widening his eyes, which he did because of the withdrawal of her previous refreshing marks.

The Roswaal residents' routine duties were split between three people: Subaru, an employee, and the two sisters, Ram and Rem. However, 80% of the mansion's functions were taken care of by Rem, while Subaru and Ram cooperated for the remaining 20%—they were taking care of it, but these were days of dire distress.

These two, who halved the labor between each other, were imposed with this work, but it was clear that they were feeling discouraged with cleaning and tidying up the unused storage room of the unused west wing.

Having the cleaning actually start was enough to completely kill Subaru and Ram's motivation.

It was standard for the mansion's cleaning to be done in rotation, cleaning the three wings one day at a time. Their motivation declined quicker because of how the west wing had cleaning three days prior, and because of how it wasn't very dirty considering that.

[Subaru: However, there's a reason behind what you say too. I'm using the duster, but I feel like the dust is just flying away and the feeling of achievement.....achoo!]

Ram, who was skipping out on her work while sitting on top of a wooden box, saw Subaru sneeze from the dust with the duster in his hand. And to make matters worst, just as the collected dust flew into the air, the cusp of it invaded the shelves at the side. Subaru crouched and picks up the tool, whose use he did not understand, that fell on the floor, seemingly with annoyance.

[Subaru: Dirtying things myself and tidying things up by myself, bad things sure are happening one after another.....oh?]

In the midst of picking up the tool that he dropped, Subaru found an incomprehensible joint on the floor. He traced the floor with his hand, and when he checked to see what it was, it seemed to be that there was a wooden cover for underfloor storage.

[Subaru: Ram, there is a hidden door here, but do you know what's inside?]

[Ram:Don't know. Forget about it, Barusu. There's a chance that insects will come flying out the moment you open it. If you're gonna do it, then do so after I leave this room and lock it.]

[Subaru: Why lock the door? Also, it's already too late.]

Subaru pulled the knob of the storage that he found and lifted the underfloor cover at once. Ram's words gave him a bad image in his head, but his curiosity got the best of him.

Immediately after that, Ram quickly got off the wooden box and rushed over to the room's door. While giving a wry smile at Ram, who had preparations to run away efficiently, Subaru nervously peeked into the underfloor storage and—

[Subaru: —Ohh?]

And then Subaru widened his eyes in astonishment.

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[Roswaal: —And thus, the things you discovered from the underfloor storage are mi~ne. Subaru bowed respectfully and respectfully pushed the wooden box in front of him onto the desk.]

The search of the west wing's storage room—as a result of the search that caused him to forget about the initial goal, an unexpected treasure was discovered.

The person who received Subaru's report, Subaru appearing to have his chest puffed up with pride, was the person sitting at the work desk, Roswaal. The daytime version of him as a feudal lord was busy with businesses he had to take care of, which contrasted with how he had an eccentric outfit, eccentric speech, and eccentric behavior.

However, when Subaru rudely cut into his time, Roswaal was far from displeased and instead seemed to be happily letting out a loose smile.

[Roswaal: I see~. Come to think of it, quite a while back, by chance I heard about a wine cellar somewhere in the villa. Under the floor of the west wing.....to think that it was in a place like that...]

Inside the wooden box that was placed on the desk appeared to be an expensive bottle of sake decorated with wood chips.

Subaru heard him say wine cellar, but he was more puzzled about a different part of Roswaal's statement.

[Subaru: Hm? Did you just say villa? But that sake was found under the mansion, you know?]

[Roswaal: Ahh, that's easy to explain. This mansion is located here just to prepare for Emilia-sama's king election, and it's essentially my residence's villa. The Mathers' principal residence is more towards east. Well, the place I'm in is the Mathers' mansion, so there's not really much importance in distinguishing between the two.]

[Subaru: It's a villa with it being this big? Then the principal residence must be.....actually, I'm scared to know, so I won't ask. Anyways, about that unexpected thing, that basement isn't one of Roswaal's preferences, huh.]

[Roswaal: I am currently the head of the family, but before that it was my father's and my grandfather's. Perhaps the basement's wine cellar was my grandfather's idea, or maybe it was a prank by my grandmother. I've been told that they were heavy drinkers.]

Subaru frowned at Roswaal, who smiled with his purple painted lips. It was quite the unrelated matter to Subaru, considering how he was talking about his own grandfather. Roswaal closes one of his eyes at Subaru's doubt and

[Roswaal: Ah~, my bad. I didn't mean to have you hear about it.But things like that are true.]

He was apt to forget about his excessive workload at the mansion, but this place truly was a different world. The common knowledge on life expectancy in this world most likely differed a lot from the common knowledge on it at Subaru's original world.

Things like the long living races and the magical existences could not simply be compared with modern medicine.

[Subaru:Anyhow, I thought I'd at least report it and brought it, but what are you going to do about your grandfather's leftover collection? A lot of it is still unused.]

[Roswaal: Hmm, good point. Keeping it in the basement like that as something like ground reinforcement would be wasteful, huh. —By the way, Subaru-kun, how are you with sake? Are you the type that can drink however much he wants? Or are you perhaps someone who gets red just from the smell of it and says thing like "I don't wanna go home tonight....."?]

[Subaru: That line I've heard about, something I've heard comes out at mixers, is said here too, huh.Also, I've never really been an active drinker. Drinking is for after I turn 20.]

[Roswaal: 20? My goodness, that takes some patience.]

Subaru replied to Roswaal while wrinkling his brows to frown at his doubt. Subaru was actually being truthful. There wasn't really any particular reason for Subaru to get his hands on sake when he was back at his original world as a minor. By the way, he also never went to a single mixer before.

Natsuki Subaru spent his days doing things completely unrelated to sake, tobacco, and women.

[Roswaal: My, that is surprising. Considering Subaru's personality, I thought you'd definitely try to look cool and get your hands on things like alcohol and tobacco.]

[Subaru: I kinda get what you think of me, but unfortunately, you are wrong. Actually, there was a time when I tried putting one of the cigarettes my father forgot to put out on my mouth once, but.....]

[Roswaal: But?]

[Subaru: The moment I did, my father returned, and I was hit plenty of times. To make matters worst, I was scolded by my mother, her fallaciously saying that I wouldn't get taller.....anyway, those hands were traumatizing.]

He may have learned about tobacco and sake if he had bad friends, but fortunately, Subaru had no bad friends, let alone any good friends. Thus, he had no opportunities.

[Subaru: Even if I were to try and stray off onto the wrong path, I couldn't find any in the first place.....huhuu, what a joke.]

[Roswaal: You are feeling nostalgic about that, but if that's the case, you probably wouldn't be very happy about being given this as a reward.]

[Subaru: Ah, that's true. There actually was a time where I was offered this sake before from this geezer and drank it, but I only thought about how it was burning my throat, stomach, and head. Or rather...]

Roswaal sought to award Subaru alcohol as if it was something natural. Subaru responded to this by pointing at the box.

[Subaru: Can someone of my age really drink this? I said this earlier, but I am still below 20 and am a minor. Im at that age where I can't look at porn sites without a guardian, you know?]

[Roswaal: I do~n't really get it, but I feel like you wouldn't be able to look at them even if you had a guardian. Putting that aside, in Lugnica you're OK to drink sake if you're above 15.]

[Subaru: Ohh, that's useful.....]

Subaru properly used his "OK", and Roswaal continues speaking with a "Moreover".

[Roswaal: It's the kingdom's rule, but each region prefers to have their own territorial laws. In other words, the territorial laws around this vicinity are decided at my own discretion.]

[Subaru: Wow, that's abuse of your authority. By those territorial laws, the judgement of my innocence and.....actually, normally you'd be innocent by the king's laws after you're older than 15, but...]

Even though the law assured him, there was no change about his indifference towards the sake gift.

It was natural because he didn't know its taste and value. Having said that, treating it as an item he'd sell would be rude towards Roswaal, who was handing it over to him as a reward.

[Subaru: It's even decorated with a ribbon. Should I put it at the end of the room.....? It'll refresh, and after I turn 20 I can open it in commemoration, having the deep emotions in my chest walk me towards the future. Stuff like that.]

[Roswaal: That's a far-sighted plan. Finishing work before you sleep, the time you eat after a hot bath.....wouldn't even be necessary to seek chances to drink sake too. It's not pro~crastination.]

[Subaru: Unreasonably offering sake to someone who can't drink seems to be called alcohol harassment. It might become an incident for a lawsuit, so be careful. Moreover, you say these things, but does Ros-chi drink?]

[Roswaal: I drank to some extent back then, but the times I do have been lowered remarkably these past several years. Well, I'll drink on occasions like banquets. Basically, I keep my limits in mi~nd. Also]

Roswaal shook his head and shrugged with his shoulders. He said that he only drank to a certain extent, but even with that attitude, an overwhelming aura came floating from him. He could not imagine what his drunk self would be like.

[Subaru: But, I'm kinda interested in how I would be with alcohol.]

He had no interest in it until now, but he suddenly became interested in his drinking limits because of how they were talking about sake the whole time. Once it became like this, he wasn't just curious about himself, he was also a bit curious about how much Emilia and Rem could drink as well. However, if there was no occasion for it, he'd never be able to find—

[Subaru: That's right, let's have a banquet! Ros-chi, you said you drank alcohol on celebrations, right?]

[Roswaal: Hm? Yea~h. I did certainly say that. I do drink enough to feel good if it's for special gathe~rings. I am human, after all.]

[Subaru: Rightt! If it's a gathering, then there's no stopping you.]

[Roswaal: Huhuhu, sheesh. —What are you planning with getting me drunk?]

[Subaru: That's rude. You're not who I'm aiming for, Ros-chi!]

He retorts Roswaal's statement, him giving Subaru a meaningful look, and then Subaru clapped his hands. That expression made his face look bad—no, he did not have a face of an evil man; he just had scary eyes. However, that was just the face Subaru had whenever he said something astounding, something that was also typical of him. Roswaal had a look that seemed to be a look of expectation in his eyes in response to Subaru's expression.

Subaru spoke of his idea with magnificence, though he wasn't sure if he could live up to his expectations.

[Subaru: If we prepare a celebratory gathering, then it would be okay to bring out the sake in the basement for a banquet, right?]

[Roswaal: —Indeed. Well it didn't really seem to be a useful wine cellar after all. To some extent, I'm kind of entrusting the purpose of the remaining sake to you. Nevertheless...]

[Subaru: Nevertheless what?]

[Roswaal: Using a banquet as an excuse to see Emilia-sama and Rem get messed up.....Subaru-kun is planning something that's pretty typical for a bo~y.]

[Subaru: That wasn't even my intention. Stop thinking like that could be my only intention!]

[Roswaal: No no no, I don't mind it.]

[Subaru: I told you, that's not it!]

He had no intention for that at all, but his ulterior motive grew a bit, and the plan of the banquet began.

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[Subaru: And thus, a plan to hold a cherry blossom viewing party has been decided, so please actively participate!]

[Emilia: Cherry blossom viewing?]

As soon as the abrupt boy Subaru visited the room, Emilia tilted her head at him.

Today Emilia had her hair up in a ponytail and she wore a long skirt. She had her finger on her cherry blossom lips, but she wasn't surprised by this sudden proposal.

She became used to Subaru's sudden proposals. This was a reaction she had because of her guessing the situation.

[Emilia: I've never heard of cherry blossom viewing, but it sounds kinda fun. Viewing cherry blossoms, huh.]

[Subaru: Yes. Back at my hometown, these cherry blossoms would bloom into a pink color after ice season. At that time there would be boisterous merrymaking under the sakura trees.....that's what cherry blossom viewing is.]

[Emilia: Huh? But, I feel like that isn't really viewing flowers.....]

[Subaru: That's the darkness of cherry blossom viewing caused by not being able to experience it too much. Well, it's held to be boisterous after all.]

Subaru smiles wryly at his pokes at the essence of cherry blossom viewing and concludes the discussion on it.

In short, Subaru, who received a reward for discovering the wine cellar, gave this proposal, but holding a cherry blossom viewing to honor the mansion—this was what the banquet gathering was passed off as. It wasn't about Subaru wanting to drink; it was more about his interest in everyone else's reactions to it.

He might've been particularly interested in seeing someone like Emilia make a complete 180, being sexy after drinking. If the situation turned into something like that, perhaps a dangerous charm would grow.

[Subaru: There will be things like sake and food as treats to enjoy the pretty cherry blossoms. That is the greatest goal of this cherry blossom viewing we'll be having! It's not because there will be sake and that I want to see Emilia-tan get messed up or anything, okay?]

[Emilia: Ah, I understand. Jeez, that's not okay, Subaru.]

[Subaru: Eh!? What!? There's no way you've found out my plan! Impossible!]

[Emilia: Children shouldn't drink sake, or else they will stop getting taller.]

[Subaru: No way! The same reason my mom had!? Also, I'll have you know that I'm not a child that breaks the kingdom's laws! I'm 18 this year, after all! I have Roswaal's permission! I am an adult! An adult!]

[Emilia: I don't think an adult would make such a fuss like that. But, Subaru is 18, huh. That's reeaally surprising.....I thought you were younger.]

He was scolded for a reason he's been told of sometime in the past, and then Emilia gives a bittersweet smile at Subaru, the noisy one. She probably added that one word precisely because she didn't feel like his face was fitting for his age.

[Subaru: Foreigners do say that the Japanese seem to have childish faces. By the way, how old did you think I was?]

[Emilia: 12.....no, 13! About 13!]

[Subaru: Isn't that younger than Felt!? Also, there's wasn't much of a difference even after you corrected yourself!]

Or more accurately, it wasn't much different than the Alam village's children's judgement. The children tried asking Emilia what age they looked to her, but the conversation wouldn't go anywhere, no matter how much time elapsed.

[Subaru: Phew, I'm tired. Also, you've been saying that I'm a child, but how about you, Emilia-tan? Can you drink sake? Are you the type that is okay with everything on the menu, from top to bottom?]

[Emilia: Sorry, I don't really understand what you're trying to say.]

He imagined Roswaal to be a heavy drinker, but he could not figure out how much Emilia would be able to drink. She could be an extreme heavyweight, and he could also imagine her to be an extreme lightweight. Emilia mumbled an “Ummm” at Subaru, who narrowed his eyes to investigate and

[Emilia: You said that, but I’ve also never drank before. Ah, I’m also of drinking age. I’m not 13.]

[Subaru: I’m not wondering about that. If Emilia-tan was 13, I would be committing a crime.]

[Emilia: Why would that be?]

[Subaru: It’s because Emilia-tan is so cute that it makes me want to commit a crime.]

[Emilia: And guess what, it’s about sake, but Puck said, “Don’t drink i~t]

[Subaru: You heard me, but you’re going to ignore me!?!]

Subaru was taken aback from Emilia’s new way of warding him off, but she had no reaction to that; instead, her neck pendant glowed, and a different voice came into the conversation.

[Puck: —That’s obvious. Sake is a drink for bad adults. Lia will always be my cute daughter, so you don’t need to get involved with stuff like that.]

The particles of the overflowing light from the pendant formed the shape of a kitten at the same time he said those overprotective words. The manifested kitten spirit sits on Emilia’s shoulders and pats her cheek with his paw.

[Puck: I won't allow you to stray my child off onto the wrong path. I will drink every bit of the sake that is shown in front of Lia, after all. I will not hand Lia over, *shasshasha*]

[Subaru: Ah, so you want to participate and drink too, huh.]

Puck, who was shadow boxing, labeled himself as Emilia's guardian, and yet it was just him really wanting to get his hands on alcohol. Anyways, it seemed like he approved of the cherry blossom viewing, so that was relieving.

[Subaru: Emilia-tan, how about you? Are you okay with Puck participating?]

[Emilia: Eh? Yeah, I'm fine with it. It seems like Puck doesn't want me to drink sake, but I can enjoy myself too by eating delicious food while viewing flowers. But how about everyone else?]

[Subaru: Roswaal is OK with it, considering it was something I planned with him in the first place. So, if Ros-chi is okay with it, then Ram should be fine too. I need to ask Rem for things like preparing the food, so if I ask her as sincerely as possible, I'll get her consent. I'll be helping with the cooking too, so.]

At first, Subaru had rough fights with peeling vegetable skins, but thanks to him being a person of small capabilities, he had been helping with the cooking lately. His ambition was different from Ram, whose improvement of her steamed potatoes has been on a halt for many years. There was also the difference in levels of enthusiasm between him and the lecturer.

[Emilia: Rem sure does seem to reeaally enjoy herself whenever she cooks together with Subaru. I've got it! How about I help with the cooking too? Subaru did doubt my cooking skills before.]

[Subaru: Something like that did happen before.wait, I haven't been open with my suspicions about that before.]

[Emilia: *Pout* You are stubborn. I made a delicious rice ball, didn't I?]

[Subaru: The flavor was delicious. It's just that I was kinda worried about how it looked.]

Previously, there was a time when Subaru had a pile of errands to do and the bento that Emilia made him hold—inside was a simple rice ball, but the shape was different from one and its size was strange. It was big enough to have a child's head in it. Eating all of it would be enough to waste his stamina.

It wasn't about the flavor; he had problems with amount of seasoning and its condition. That is how Subaru evaluated Emilia's cooking skills.

[Emilia: Hmph. If you say that much, then fine. I'll definitely cause you to be dumbfounded when we cook for the cherry blossom viewing. And after that it will be too late to apologize, by the way.]

[Subaru: If we're talking about being dumbfounded, then it's already happened plenty! But well, I'll look forward to it.]

Emilia had an angry face, while Subaru had a relaxed one. Emilia was dissatisfied, being someone who wanted to triumph over Subaru, but she was looking forward to the anticipated event, so it couldn't be helped.

[Emilia: So when will the cherry blossom viewing be held?]

[Subaru: Even if I said "There's no time like the present!", we don't have enough prepared for it today. However, if we don't do it as fast as possible, the hype will die down, so talk to everyone, and it will be held the day after tomorrow.]

He wanted to make a specific schedule such that it wouldn't conflict with the schedule of the mansion's busiest person, Roswaal. They would hold the cherry blossom viewing on a day when he wouldn't be away from the mansion for the night.

[Subaru: Guess it would be best to hold it at the forest's flower garden right? Since it's called cherry blossom viewing. It really would be awesome if cherry blossoms were there, but the season and the world are different, so.]

[Puck: Looking at a bunch of flowers while drinking sake.....hmmm, that is elegant. Ah, but there's something I'm worried about if we do hold it at the forest.]

[Subaru: Something you're worried about?]

Subaru was lost in his thoughts deciding where the meeting place would be when Puck entered the conversation with his tail standing up. While washing his face with his hand, the kitten said "You see" at Subaru's doubt as a preface to his next statement and

[Puck: If it's held away from the mansion, Betty can't participate. That child won't leave the mansion, because that is her duty.]

[Subaru: Eh, Beako's? I don't really get it, but can't she sneak away just for a little bit? Plus, the person in charge of the mansion approved of the cherry blossom viewing, you know?]

[Puck: Subaru, I get what you're trying to say. But the reason Betty stays at the forbidden archives isn't necessarily because Roswal told her to. Thus, that child won't leave the mansion.]

In response to Puck, him being awfully conclusive about the matter, Subaru explained his reasoning and then kept silent.

You could say that Subaru had a difficult type of relationship with Beatrice, who secluded herself in the forbidden archives. However, he would feel guilty if he left her out and had the cherry blossom viewing. There was no doubt about that.

She was a dishonest little girl. If they had something like a cherry blossom viewing without her and she found out about it, she would obviously never let that go.

[Subaru: Ahhh, Beako is hard to deal with!Wait, but didn't she come all the way to the village to heal my injuries before? What was that about?]

[Puck: That was an exception among exceptions. I was the one that made the request, but I was surprised with how she listened.]

Perhaps Beatrice's merciful heart was moved because it was a highly urgent situation. Whatever the reason may have been, the conditions were too different to label a situation between life and death as a game.

[Emilia: If Beatrice can't go, then the cherry blossom viewing is off.....right?]

Emilia looks down with seemingly regretful eyes at Subaru, who was silent and didn't have any good ideas come to mind. He saw the lonesome look in her eyes, and then Subaru's spirit got fired up, as he had to do something about it.

Beatrice wouldn't leave the mansion. She could not see the flower garden if she didn't leave the mansion. His original intention was to have a banquet, using cherry blossom viewing as an excuse to have one. It was important to accomplish the duties and prepare the place. These were the things he was thinking about.

[Subaru: —Alright, then let's do this!]

Subaru came up with an idea to recover from this hopeless situation and clapped his hands loudly.

Subaru's epiphanizing behavior caused Emilia's bluish purple eyes to shine, as if they were glimmering with hope.

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—After 2 days where this and that happened, the appointed day for the party immediately arrived.

After obtaining Emilia's consent, the preparations for the party moved at a quick pace. This was because of Rem, the enthusiastic girl, put in major effort for Subaru's idea that he was mostly responsible for.

[Rem: I cannot let Subaru-kun embarrass himself, so I'll work at full power too.]

These were the strong words of Rem, who chopped up the fish and meat so fast that you couldn't see her cute face.

Thanks to Rem cooperating without a hint of disagreement on her face, the parties preparations progressed smoothly, despite the increase in work.

Subaru and Emilia helped with the cooking and the preparations for the hall too, but the extent of the effects they had will not be revealed in order to preserve their honor.

In any case, they were right before the start of the banquet. Subaru left the preparations for the hall up to Rem and the others, and headed over to a place to fulfill a role that only he could do.

This certain place was—

[Subaru: So yeah, the preparations are there. If you come, everyone would be there.]

[Beatrice:I don't understand why I'd go, I suppose.]

Subaru moved freely throughout the mansion and found the forbidden archives through his explosive intuition. Beatrice previously overreacted in all of her reactions, but lately she's had a face of complete resignation. On one hand, he thought quietly to himself that he was glad about it, but on the other, he also felt unsatisfied. Thus, he threw away those feelings away for today.

Subaru gave a friendly tap to Beatrice's shoulder, who was sitting on the usual stepladder. Then

[Subaru: I'm telling you to stop missing the point. Today is the day for everyone in the mansion to view cherry blossoms together. You'd probably complain if I told you in advance, so I made it a surprise just for you!]

[Beatrice: The first and second half of your statement contradict each other! I don't really know what a cherry blossom viewing is, but whatever it is, if I have to participate in such a foolish event.....]

[Subaru: See? I thought you'd say that. A persuasion that should've taken two rounds has been settled in one instead. You were going to end up participating while complaining anyway, so stop wasting time and let's go!]

[Beatrice: You are being bothersome, but I get it. So stop making that face, I suppose! You are irritating! Irritating! What do you know about me!? And anyway.....]

Beatrice shakes off Subaru's hand, who was trying to bring her out, and she jumped off the ladder. And then surely she was glaring at Subaru with her light blue eyes.

[Beatrice: Be it cherry blossom viewing or some other event, I will not leave the mansion. Just do it with you and the others, I suppose. I will not go to any.....]

[Subaru: I won't allow it. Leaving you pouting at the mansion and going to the party? I'd feel unpleasant and there's no way I'd be able to enjoy the party. Have fun and be a sacrifice for our sake. No buts.]

[Beatrice: Wh—who gave you the right to say such a thing!?!]

[Subaru: Ah-ah-ah, can't hear you~]

Subaru shut his ears in front of Beatrice and ignored her opinion as she yelled. That behavior caused Beatrice's face to get redder and redder, but Subaru still continued to speak to that girl with an angry heart.

[Subaru: Puck told me that you have some complicated circumstances and that you can't leave the mansion. Thus, I took those conditions into consideration and polished the plan. Hence, the preparations are already done, and all that's left is for me to kidnap you.]

[—]

[Subaru: Honestly, I understand your feelings. Whatever type of fun event it is, going out for it just before it happens is troubling enough to kill. However, the truth is, if you do try and go out, you will have fun in one way or another. I'll give you the first forceful push.]

There was no response from Beatrice, who had a sullen face. However, this was precisely because she answered with a sigh of resignation and a loose posture. Subaru lets out a slight smile, taps her shoulder, and then brings her out of the forbidden archives.

And just like that, the two stood up, left the mansion's corridor, and finally reached—

[Subaru: Come in come in. We are the final participants.]

[Beatrice: Jeez, just what are you planning, I suppose.....]

He pushes the back of the girl with an unenthusiastic face, Beatrice, and opens the door in front of them. And then Subaru lets out a smile of satisfaction at the doubtful girl, whose eyes were filled with astonishment as she glanced to the side.

[Subaru: And thus, today is the party for deepening the friendship of all the mansion's members.....the Roswaal residence organization's first "Stargazing" party!]

Subaru jumps in front of the startled girl, Beatrice, and makes a grand declaration with his hands spread out.

This was the Roswaal residence's west wing's top floor—the forgotten dance hall. In this dance hall that had been decorated, something that hadn't been done for a long time, a wind blew from the open terrace, caused by the quick footed dancers enjoying themselves. Food was lined up at the corner of the spacious room, but the amount was moderate because of how many participants there were. Instead, they were completely absorbed with the quality and its appearance.

[Emilia: —Ah, it's Subaru and the others. Beatrice is with him too!]

The arrival of Subaru and the others gets noticed by Emilia, who came to the hall beforehand, and then she raised her voice at them. Everyone else responds to that voice, and Rem rushed over to them.

[Rem: Good work, Subaru-kun. Leaving Beatrice-sama up to Subaru-kun was the best idea after all. As expected of the person in charge of the mansion's Beatrice.]

[Subaru: Heh, I'm embarrassed. Well, this is the least I could do as the best Beatrice worker.]

[Beatrice: I don't recall you being the person in charge of me, nor do I recall you being my worker! This is extreme disgrace, I suppose!]

Beatrice was angry at the two cheerful individuals, but Subaru and Rem calmly ignored her. Beatrice quivered angrily at that treatment, but a small silhouette gently swooped down upon her shoulder. Beatrice's suddenly became cheerful upon seeing the furball that appeared right beside her face.

[Beatrice: Nii-cha!]

[Puck: Welcome Betty. I thought that you'd perhaps lack the willpower to go and wouldn't come.....but as expected, Subaru knows what makes you tick.]

[Beatrice: N—no way that's true! Nii-cha will always be my number one, I suppose. Yeah. Yeah, that's it. That's definitely true, I suppose.]

[Puck: Ahaha, I'm happy. That would be nice if it really was true.]

For some reason Beatrice's cheeks stiffened just for a second in response to Puck's reply. However, Subaru took no note of their exchanges and listened cautiously to Rem's explanation of the hall.

[Rem: The cooking and the setting of the table were done by Emilia-sama and Nee-sama. Subaru-kun also helped with the pre-cooking, enough so that there was less labor than usual.]

[Subaru: Is that so? But didn't things like the hall decorations increase the amount of work? I'm really sorry about that. I'll definitely make up for it somehow next time.]

[Rem: Don't worry about it. In exchange, tonight I'll have you let me see your sleeping face for longer than usual.]

[Subaru: Hm.....? Didn't you just say something kinda odd? Sleeping face?]

[Rem: Nope, I didn't say anything odd~]

He felt like he heard something that he could not ignore, but the matter was avoided due to Rem's cute smile. For now, Subaru headed towards the terrace to lead the stargazing party while he tilted his head.

[Emilia: Subaru, good work. You brought Beatrice over too. Impressive impressive.]

Subaru had went to greet Emilia. She patted his head while smiling at this terrace exposed to the nightwind. The feeling from the touch of her white fingertips caused Subaru to narrow his eyes awkwardly.

[Subaru: Well, kinda seems like you've been satisfied like this. Kinda feels like I want to make you aware of how I am a man, not a kid, and you're a woman, through a certain request. That's the kind of dilemma I'm having.]

[Emilia: —? I know that Subaru is a little man and that I am a woman.]

[Subaru: Umm, you see I want to take away the unnecessary part of that label so.....]

[Ram: Barusu]

Ram, the person who stood next to the terrace standing with Roswaal, gave a sharp glare at Subaru, who was giving in to his ulterior motive. It seemed like she was telling him “Hurry up and start” with her look and her tone, so Subaru gave a bitter smile.

[Rem: Subaru-kun, here you go.]

[Subaru: Oh, thanks.]

Rem acted as a waiter and presented a silver tray as if the timing was planned. There were glasses of sake on it. He took one and looked around him.

Emilia, Rem, and Roswaal and the others—everyone had a glass in their hands. Beatrice was next to Puck and was also holding a glass of juice while pouting.

[Subaru: Ehhh, I thank you all for participating in today’s “Stargazing Party” at the Roswaal residence. After this, we will work together for one cause, and that is to deepen friendship with this party. Well then, first I’d like to talk about the benefit of the essential part of this party. I will talk about the three three essentials of life—]

[Emilia: Hey, hey, Subaru. By any chance, is that talk going to be reaaally long?]

[Subaru: No, I was going to make a joke saying, “Aren’t they your stomach, your wallet, and your store of patience with your mother?” but.....]

[Ram: Barusu]

Subaru once again had that sharp look shoot through him. He dejectedly hands over the floor to the one who hosted the program—in other words, the mansion’s representative, Roswaal.

Roswaal, who had been laughing at those interactions, raises his glass slightly and

[Roswaal: Even if I have a long greeting, it’ll just have dampen everyone’s enthusiasm. Thus, I have one thing to say—The people who have gathered here like this are comrades, no matter what circumstances. There may be various hardships in the future, but we will join forces and overcome them. And so, let’s have a toast for today’s divine protection of the stars.]

[Everyone: —Cheers!]

Everyone tilted their glasses and overlapped with their voices in response to Roswaal’s speech, which was so normal that it was a letdown.

The bumping of their glasses makes a light sound, and then the banquet calmly began under the starlight of the night.

5

Well, that was how the stargazing party began enjoyably and calmly. It was called a banquet and a gathering, but it wasn’t specifically to celebrate something. If there had to be label for it, perhaps it would be called the celebration of the settlement of the mabeasts incident, along with the celebration of the recovery of the casualties that resulted from it.

The abundance of food set up on the table was a result of having more than the usual amount of passion being put into making it. Of course, it wasn’t as if Rem’s usual cooking was missing anything crucial, but there was a special flavor in it tonight.

He looked up at the stars and enjoyed a little bit of sake while banqueting on those dishes.

He wasn't able to make the plan of viewing cherry blossoms under the full bloom cherry trees into a reality, but they had a whole view of the sky of the crisp and cold night from the terrace. Throughout the whole sky, he saw stars that glowed, a sight that faded with cherry trees.

The air was refreshing and perfectly clear. The open sky had not a single cloud. He was enjoying the stars, and yet all the best conditions were lined up. It was the best situation for stargazing sake. Subaru's own name was also associated with the stars, and he was enthusiastic about being able to persistently show his vast knowledge of stars.

However—,

[Emilia: Hmmm? Wats wrong, Subaru? You sheem kwind.....aha, that's a reeaally weird face. Also, it's unfair of you to have that much. Subaru is planning on making everyone have all the candy to themselves~]

[Subaru: I feel hurt from you saying I have a weird face, and plus I am not having a lot! Ahhh, jeez. Emilia-tan, you can't do that. Look, see how much you spilled.....]

The girl who came snuggling up to him, Emilia, had a happy smile with an embarrassed face. The boy who calmed her down, Subaru, makes a displeased expression with his lips and once again empties the glass with one gulp. The amber liquid fades his cherry blossom lips, he starts to feel a little sick, and then lets out a sigh of hot breath.

[Emilia: Oomyoo.....sake is goood. It's unfair that this stuff has been kept a secret from me until now. Everyone kept this hidden from me. Sneaky.....sneaky? Yeah, that was sneaky~ huhuhu]

[Subaru: Ahh, damn this girl's cute!]

Emilia sat down on the terrace's floor and was pouring more sake into her glass. Looking at the amount of empty sake bottles that had already been lined up, you could say that Emilia had quite the drinking capacity. She wasn't drunk enough to pass out, though considering that, it was pretty quick for the situation to turn into what it currently was.

[Subaru: Speaking of what I imagined, this would be it. Speaking of what I impression I had, this would be it. However, on top of being weak to sake, Emilia-tan also has bad drinking habits, huh.....]

Based on what he saw from socializing with Emilia up until now, Subaru had thought that Emilia probably would only be either extremely tolerant with alcohol, or extremely weak with alcohol. The result, as you see—he was still happy with her cute but rambunctious relationship with alcohol, not causing trouble with things like her beginning to take off her clothes, or her beginning to vomit.

Though it was very worrying, considering how she wouldn't listen to him if he suggested that she stop drinking.

[Subaru: If I could I'd stop her. I want to put her to sleep, and I'd even sing a lullaby to do so, but.....]

Emilia was leaning on him with her amorous cheeks that made him dizzy. He had a reason for not stopping the situation. It was simply because he couldn't move.

This is because—

[Rem: —Subaru-kun]

[Subaru: Yes, what is it, Rem-san?]

[Rem: Hed]

[Subaru: That hurts you know, Rem-san.]

Subaru sits with his legs crossed at the terrace. Rem had her head placed on his lap. She had an ordinary unemotional expression, but her face was red enough to make him worried.

Rem used Subaru's lap as a pillow, but her movement was slow and she had few requests. She was now just biting on Subaru's thigh as if it was an afterthought. She wasn't showing signs of a bad drunk.

But, he had doubts about if he could call it a drinking habit. Rem sure was drunk, but unlike Emilia, she didn't have a single sip of sake.

[Subaru: To think that you got this dead drunk just from the smell of sake and not from the air and the atmosphere...But if that's the case, then what happened with the sake used in things like the cooking? There was even times where Ros-chi poured wine.]

She also served glasses of sake at the start of the stargazing party. In response to Subaru's doubt, the girl on his lap, Rem, moved only her head and looked up at him.

[Rem: Pleasee don't make funs of me, Subaru-kun. Subaru-kun. Subaru-kun.]

[Subaru: The usual calling me three times, huh. Umm, what is the meaning of this?]

[Rem: I feel shtrained because I'm alwaysh doing important work. But, todayy is a fun gathering, sho I feel a bit relaxed. Soo, it's yoouuur fault, Subaru-kun.]

She smiled with her whole face. However, the way she spoke was suspicious, and on top of that, she had inconsistent reasoning.

Moreover, at the middle of the conversation, she put her arms around Subaru's back and was pushing her head against his stomach. It was a violent way of spoiling herself, but this girl was a complete drunk. While being surprised from this side of her, Subaru casually patted Rem's head, and she purred in delight.

[Subaru: What are you, a cat!? You are an oni.....or rather, with my knowledge I imagined onis to be tolerant of sake. But perhaps the history about that is inaccurate when it's a different world.]

[Ram: I don't know what you are comparing onis too, but it's true that the oni clan is a race that is tolerant of sake. Ever since I was little, I also drank at the adult's banquets.]

Once Subaru cocked his head in puzzlement at oni drinking capabilities, he heard Ram from behind responding to his doubt.



[Subaru: You really just admitted to underage drinking as if it was nothing, huh. I'm not trying to meddle with the Oni rules.....but the expression you have and the way you're speaking make me suspicious.]

[Ram: Of course. We train differently.]

When Subaru turned around, he saw Ram sitting on a chair elegantly tilting a glass. She was wearing maid garments, and yet she conducted herself with overflowing elegance as a female noble would show. This is what her constant behavior of unbreakable confidence and her constant remarkable dignity reminded him of.

That girl who acted like a female noble, Ram, glared at Rem holding onto Subaru with her arms and

[Ram: I see that Rem is enjoying the drinking party. How lovely.]

[Subaru: This is enjoyment.....it looks like she's extremely enjoying herself, but Rem being like this really is just the atmosphere. She hasn't had a sip of alcohol, and yet this is how she is. Was Rem like this at the oni village banquets?]

[Ram:Rem and I had complicated situations. Moreover, I also didn't want to get Rem involved in adult only gatherings.]

Ram responding while looking down caused Subaru to hesitate from asking more. He just heard about the sisters' horns the other day. Asking about their hometown was taboo.

When he completely forgot about it and brought up the topic, he wanted to believe that his judgement was becoming cloudy because of the sake.

—He found it really hard to understand the situation around him, but in truth, Subaru also was drinking a lot of sake.

It would be nice if he got intoxicated and started to have a new side of himself, like Emilia and Rem, to be charming, but sadly, Subaru was tolerant with alcohol.

He was not drunk and could still interpret his situations. He was quite amazed with his own genetics.

[Subaru: The flavor of sake wasn't bad.That's what I've learned, and I guess the fact that I shouldn't get girls to drink sake carelessly.]

[Ram: I feel like that also is pushing it too far.]

He was shocked because of all the countless empty sake bottles that were around Ram, who said those words and tilted a sake cup. Things like her attitude, genetics, talent, and other random things all depicted her manner as an oni.

[Subaru: Ram is a heavy drinker, just like I thought. Which means that the others.....Puck, wow.]

He headed towards the hall, saw Puck on the table, and then opened his eyes wide.

Puck boasted himself and had said "I won't let Lia drink sake", but it seemed that he completely forgot about that spirit and was immersed in a bowl of sake, enjoying his bath of alcohol.

At the front, he saw Roswaal give a sake cup to the person he was talking with; it was a spirit and an imperial sorcerer being surprisingly friendly with each other. And then—,

[Subaru: Ah, I see. Beatrice, that rascal.]

Subaru searches around for a little silhouette, and looks at the girl beside the terrace. Beatrice sat on the railing of the empty terrace, her hair swaying along with the wind.

He saw her poignant expression, which was an expression indicative of loneliness, making Subaru let out a sigh.

[Subaru: Well, guess I'll go mess with her for a bit. Emilia-tan, I'm sorry, but look after Rem.]

[Emilia: Hmmm? Ya, got it. Here here, Rem, come here~. Mmhuhu, sooo cute.]

He politely unwraps arms of the still eyed girl that she had around his back, Rem, and left her to Emilia. Emilia takes the unmoving girl, and hugs her happily as a reward. The two cute girls rubbed their cheeks against each other while Emilia gently rubbed Rem's blue hair.

[Subaru:I want to take a picture of this.]

[Ram: I'll burn it into memory.]

Ram let out a vigorous nod at Subaru, who didn't want to let the situation pass by him. He left the rest up to Ram's memory and headed towards the terrace, where Beatrice stood still.

She was certainly gazing at the starry sky. He leans against the railing next to her and smiles.

[Subaru: Don't let it end with the two of us. You wouldn't be able to bear being seen as a loner, don't you think?]

[Beatrice: That would be an unreasonable insult, I suppose. Also, mind your own business.You are the one who said to not drink sake in the first place, I suppose. What am I supposed to do?]

[Subaru: Because, I did invite you, but when I imagine a girl like you drinking alcohol, then I couldn't allow it. It's painful imagining a girl that had

the taste of sake slip into her memory drink in the forbidden archives by herself. I don't want to think about it.]

The purpose of this party was to have fun. There was no reason to make this girl commit crime. Or rather, this certainly was something Puck should have put an end to.

[Subaru: And yet, that cat is drinking heartily in an alcoholic bath. What kind of hedonist is this guy?]

[Beatrice: I won't let you insult Nii-cha, I suppose. Moreover, Nii-cha's behavior shows just how much he trusts me. So it's not like I feel lone.....]

[Subaru: Ah! Emilia-tan and Rem are closer than they were earlier. Wait.....!]

[Beatrice: It is beyond rude for you to come this far and do things like talk with me inattentively, I suppose!]

[Subaru: Ahh! No, you've got it wrong! Emilia-tan and Rem were getting into this thing over there and I was feeling these good manlike feelings. It's not like my heart's been stolen, but I need a camera.....!]

[Beatrice: You are not convincing me at all!]

On the other side of the terrace, Emilia was patting Rem's body, while Rem purred with Emilia embracing her. On top of the situation being lovely, they were also being gay.

[Subaru: I'm so sad that I'm not over there.....!]

[Beatrice: It's fine, I suppose. Roswaal has taken Nii-cha away from me. It would be suiting for me to shiver in the nightwind all by myself.]

[Subaru: My bad, my baddd. The host will get hurt if a pouting guest pierces through him like that with words. Jeez, guess I've got no choice.]

Subaru laughs at the girl who insulted him as unfaithful, and he jumps off the railing just like Beatrice did. However, just before he settled on the ground, he felt giddy from the sake and was about to fall.

[Subaru: Ohwa!? Sh—shit! I thought I was gonna become smashed tomato!]

[Beatrice: Can you not laugh at a talent like risking your life like that? Even if you were to die like a smashed insect, I probably wouldn't be that amused, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Don't take responsibility for hospitality when I'm at the risk of life! That was really dangerous, huh.]

Subaru wipes off his cold sweat, and sat down next to the shocked girl, Beatrice. She wasn't welcoming him, but she wasn't running away either. This meant that Beatrice was okay with him sitting next to her.

[Subaru: Alright, then I will have a lovely talk with you, seeing how you're lounging around. I actually wanted to use the starry sky as a way to talk about romantic topics and get lively with Emilia-tan, but the alcohol had an unparalleled amount of effect on her, so the plan has been setback.]

[Beatrice: I hear nothing but a schemer that sounds like he's had his plans foiled, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Yes, that's true. I know that's true! But forget about that for now. And so, about the stars back at my hometown...over there, each of the stars have many anecdotes to go with their names.]

Subaru had these talks about stars, which people would certainly listen to, and it managed to make Beatrice interested and brought a smile to her face. Subaru holds his breath as she looks up at the stars throughout the sky while she showed enthusiasm like that.

When Subaru looked up at the starry sky, he was confused for a second, although this was something that happened every time.

—At any rate, the stars high up in the sky looked different from the heavenly bodies that Subaru knew well.

There was the Polaris star that stood out, shining brightly, and there was the Big Dipper that lined up near it. He did not know where the seasonal, awaited Summer triangle was. Neither did he know where the Winter Triangle, the Orion constellation, and the Cassiopeia constellation were either.

Ironically, he'd quickly know the answer if he looked up at the night sky. He'd understand that the stars in this world were in completely different locations compared to the stars in his world, based off their arrangement.

[Beatrice:Looks like you forgot about them. If you have nothing to say, then I'm gonna go over there, I suppose.]

[Subaru: I didn't forget about them. I was just puzzled because there are so many.....first, look. The excessively glowing star over there is Polaris. Basically, if you get lost, rely on that star. That way is generally north.]

[Beatrice: No way. That's south.]

[Subaru: Okay, then they're the southern polar stars.]

[Beatrice: What do you mean "Okay then"! It sounds like you're just improvising whatever's suitable!]

In truth, Subaru really was saying whatever was suitable. However, he hid that fact behind a bold smile and continued talking. If he pulled out here at a scene like this, he would be defeated, though he didn't know what the match was, probably due to the sake.

In response to Beatrice's doubtful look, Subaru points at the southern polar stars and

[Subaru: Look for other stars using those southern polar stars as a starting point. Look a bit lower, do you see how the five stars line up to form an "M"? That is the Cassiopeia constellation.]

[Beatrice: I don't know what an "M" is, and I don't see a form of anything.]

[Subaru: Don't see it, feel it. Ah, if you don't know what an M is, you can think of it is an anchor instead. The story behind Cassiopeia...well you see it's a story about a prideful, loveable mother named Cassiopeia who displeased the people around her because of how she boasted about her daughter Andromeda too much. Something like that.]

[Beatrice:The stories behind the stars sure do stink of humans, I suppose.]

Beatrice is amazed by Subaru's stories. He relaxes his cheeks at that impression, which she let out with a sigh.

[Subaru: Riiightt? Back at my home town, people treat the stars like gods, but so many of those "gods" are only troublemakers. So they're quite human! And that is what's interesting about them.]

[Beatrice: Calling them gods is exaggeration. You sure did explain complex existences in a pretty egotistical way.]

[Subaru: When you think of supernatural existences, you think they're awesome. But, when you see a similar existence, a spirit, submerge himself in a sake bath without a care in the world, then that's not convincing at all.]

Ahead of him, Subaru saw Roswaal pouring new sake into the empty alcohol bath that Puck was in.

Beatrice was also looking at the scene. While making an expected serious face, she said

[Beatrice: Nii-cha is a great spirit that is unusual in every way. So uh, stop using Nii-cha's composure as a standard for spirits, I suppose. Nii-cha is just super special.]

[Subaru: Thank you for managing a difficult followup. So, about the other stars.....that's right, okay! Let's look for the one and only Subaru!]

[Beatrice:Huh?]

In response to Subaru snapping his fingers and his teeth glistening, Beatrice perceived him as a pitiful thing, causing Subaru to hurriedly shake his head at her behavior.

[Subaru: Wait wait wait, don't pity me! It's different. Subaru is my name, but I am named after a star. "Subaru" is a star cluster that has many stars gathered together. So I'm suggesting that we should look for that.]

[Beatrice: Your parents have done a cruel thing to you, naming you after a twinkling star in the night sky like that, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Don't look down upon it by implying it failed to live up to its name!]

He actually did care about it. It seemed like he was going to come in conflict with that complex, so Subaru pointed his finger at the sky while covering it up with a frivolous attitude.

[Subaru You might not be interested, but stay with me for a little bit more. I thought I'd spout some drunk nonsense, so.]

[Beatrice:I didn't go as far as to say I wasn't interested.]

[—]

Beatrice whispered those words quietly to Subaru, who was in high spirits. When he opened his eyes wide at that unexpected word, the little girl looked away slightly. Her cheeks were slightly red.

[Subaru: What is this what is this? You are a dishonest loli! It can't be helped. It just can't be helped! Alright, then I guess I'll continue the super fun talk about the starry sky!]

[Beatrice: You are loud, I suppose. You're irritating.]

[Subaru: Yeah yeah, cute cute!]

Subaru's attitude improved completely because of Beatrice's attitude and started to talk a lot with a good mood. He looks up at the unfamiliar starry sky, and started to talk about an abundance of misdirected stories without stopping.

He kind of felt like the ease of his head was joining together with the ease of his heart.

[Beatrice: Roswaal]

[Roswaal: Oh, had enough with your rendezvous with Subaru-kun?]

Roswaal says this, shakes his glass, and smiles at the girl who came back from the terrace, Beatrice. In response to the clown's words, Beatrice gives a displeased looking frown.

[Beatrice: Keep your jokes reasonable, I suppose. Me having honest fun times with *that*? I'm not amused.]

[Roswaal: Jeez you are not honest with yo~urself. That part of you doesn't change, hu~h.]

[Beatrice: That's a given, I suppose. I'm not Nii-cha's next apprentice for that aspect. Moreover.....]

Beatrice glances at Ram, who sat facing Roswaal. Roswaal guesses the meaning of that look. When he gave an acknowledging gesture with his chin, Ram silently left her seat.

Ram drinks the glass of sake in her hand dry, bows, and then headed towards the terrace. Subaru, Emilia, and Ram were sound asleep, lying down peacefully.

Ram covers each of them with prepared blankets one at a time. She did it politely with Emilia, affectionately with Rem, and then with Subaru, she did in it a way so that his face was concealed.

[Roswaal: Girls not used to drinking are cute. Subaru-kun did appear to be fine, but it seems like he surprisingly hit his limi~t.]

[Beatrice: He collapsed as if he couldn't take it anymore, I suppose. The way he walked and the way he talked were suspicious from the start.....he's always crazy, so it makes sense how I wasn't noticing it.]

[Roswaal: In comparison, you supported him as if you understood how he became unable to move from his drunkenness. Did you see a difference between that and the usual Subaru-kun?.....I wonder.]

[—]

[Roswaal: I'd like you to stop making that scary look with your eyes, since it's just a mere jo~ke.]

Beatrice lets out a long, tired sigh at Roswaal, whose intention was to tease implicatively. This heavy, frail sigh was as long as the amount of time they've known each other.

Roswaal shrugs his shoulders in resignation at that gesture she made, which didn't suit her childish appearance.

[Roswaal: Did you not enjoy this evening?]

[Beatrice: Did you think otherwise? Boisterous partying like this.....as someone who hates peace being disturbed, this is something that irritates me the most.]

[Roswaal: You sure about that? When I consider how you've been lately, I can't honestly nod my head at that. You were just submitting to the silence of peace. The real you is.....]

[Beatrice: Roswaal]

The sharp look and the sharp voice she gave Roswaal made him stop speaking in the middle of his sentence. Just then, an awkward atmosphere came floating in. However, that—

[Puck: Betty]

[Beatrice:Nii-cha]

The third person that was left at that place, Puck, tilts his head in doubt while being in a bowl of sake.

[Puck: Betty, you didn't really like this party?]

[Beatrice:That...that's not really true, I suppose. Just seeing Nii-cha enjoying himself is enough happiness for me. However, today Nii-cha reeks of liquor, so I won't hug you, I suppose.]

[Puck: Nyan]

Puck splashes inside of the bowl of sake and then sinks. He drinks all of the sake in the bowl in one gulp and drives away the smell of liquor from the body as he jumps out.

[Puck: How do I smell?]

[Beatrice: You still reek of liquor.]

[Puck: Then how about this?]

In response to Beatrice's judgement, Puck's body illuminates while he shakes his whiskers. The cat's body reconstructs after that flicker of light, and then all of the effects from before were gone.

[Roswaal: Being able to go on without having a hangover, what a convenient nature.]

[Puck: In exchange, the sake I drank and the food I ate are gone, though. Looking it that way, the bodies of spirits aren't very amusing.]

Puck winks at Roswaal's straightforward impression and then climbs onto Beatrice's shoulder. Puck brings himself close to her cheeks, his liquor smell being gone, and then Beatrice glares at Roswaal.

[Roswaal: Oh, that's an angry face. What the he~ck happened?]

[Beatrice: I just want to hear your real intention, I suppose. What was the point of this thing tonight?]

[Roswaal: It's just like what I said before the to~ast. Everyone here needs to work together for the problems in the future. —For the sake of my dearest wish, these are the members. That's what I've decided.]

[—]

[Roswaal: You should prepare yourself too. The time for fulfilling that long long contract is near. At the very least, I am prepared for it.]

Roswaal talks in a serious tone and heads towards the terrace with a glass in his hand. Roswaal had the sleeping boy and the others projected into his eyes beyond the world of blue amber.

Beatrice, who knew his dearest wish, did not affirm his decision, nor was she negative towards it. And then the reason Beatrice abandoned choosing one is because she had chosen to take up a vast amount of time.

[Roswaal:No matter what happens, I am wishing for your success. That is one of my few motives, as a person who only forms lies.]

[Beatrice: This is some boring sentimentality, I suppose. Are you saying that I should have sympathy for you?]

[Roswaal: Empathy. After all, You and I are unique accomplices in this world.]

Roswaal says those words and put up a fresh glass onto the table. The glass was filled with amber sake. The clown pushes the glass in front of the girl.

[Beatrice: What is this?]

[Roswaal: It's yours. It would be cruel if you ended up not being able to drink a single drop of sake after you were invited to this banquet. Plus, the children who disagreed with you drinking seem to be sound asleep.]

Roswaal closes one of his eyes with an evil smile and offered the sake to Beatrice. Beatrice responds to those words by reaching for the glass.

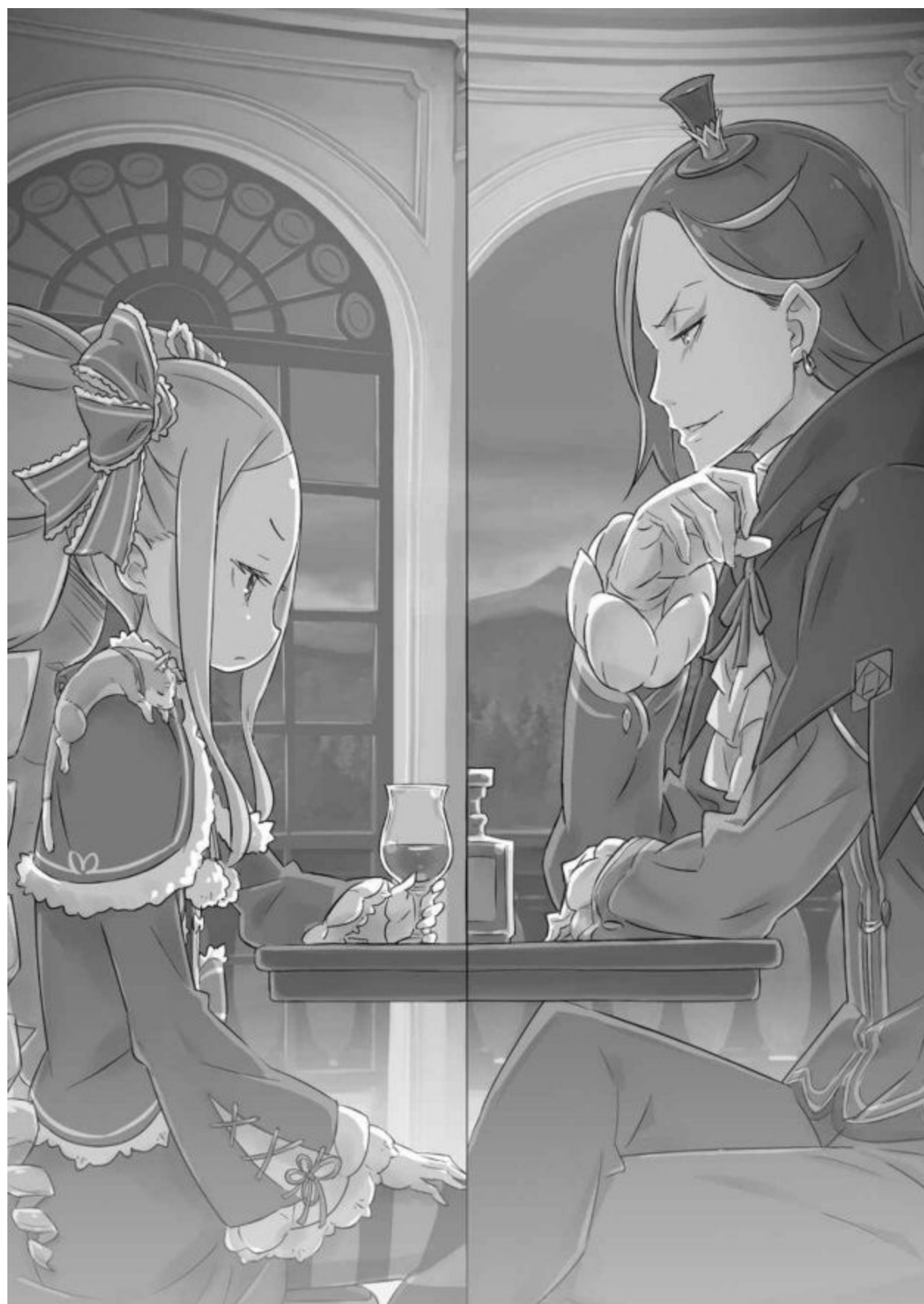
However, just before that, the wind blew.

The breeze that flew in from the terrace and filled the stillness of the night caused Beatrice to remember a conversation from before.

[—]

And then, she pushes the glass back and rejected the offer of sake.

[Beatrice: I won't drink it, I suppose.]



[Roswaal: Is this you being faithful to Subaru-kun? Once again, you are surprisingly.....]

[Beatrice: Don't misunderstand me here. The reason why I won't drink isn't because I listened to what that kid said, I suppose.It's because my mom told me not to a long time ago.]

Roswaal kept his silence as a response to Beatrice's reply. Seeing how it had an instant effect on him, Beatrice pet Puck's back with a face indicating that she was done with the matter.

She did have a night like this before. —Under the night sky, Beatrice's mother did not make a pleasant face at Beatrice tasting sake. She felt like there were also other voices that told her to stop.

Thus, the person that continued to stagnate in the forbidden archives could not violate the words her mother said that day.

[Beatrice: That's all there is to it. —What he said has nothing to do with me, I suppose.]

Beatrice says this explanation and never tasted the sake.

The night of the banquet advances.

The night of the banquet where the host learned about the taste of alcohol and the troubles with it, and where the girls' drinking habits became completely exposed, slowly advances.

Only the starry sky looked down on those peaceful hours in silence.

